Grade 6 and Grade 12 Test Results Released

Department of Education

News Releases

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The Department of Education has released results of Grade 6 and Grade 12 student assessments, part of the Nova Scotia government's commitment to expand and enhance testing in the province's public schools.

"Tracking student performance is fundamental to improving public school education in Nova Scotia," said Education Minister Jane Purves. "It helps everyone see where the weak spots are and where we have to focus more attention."

In 1999-2000, Atlantic Canada Examinations in English 12, English/communications 12, chemistry 12, and chimie 12 (immersion) were administered for the first time. The exams were written in January by students completing courses in the first semester and in June by those in second-semester and full-year courses. Results formed a part of each student's mark.

Student performance on the Grade 12 Atlantic Canada Examinations resulted in the following provincial averages:
-- chemistry 12 53.4 per cent
-- chimie 12 52.7 per cent
-- English 12 60.2 per cent
-- English/communications 12 50.9 per cent

The results will serve as a baseline for future annual assessments in Nova Scotia. Similar assessments for other subject areas will be added in the coming years.

Grade 6 tests in English language arts were administered in spring 2000 for the second year.

In four of the assessment categories, achievement is based on an expectation that students should perform at level three. In the information text category, achievement is based on a 10-point scale. A comparison of the 1999 and 2000 results shows fluctuations in most categories, and a significant drop in one.

There is an improvement in performance on the personal response to a poem task:

	1999	2000
(percentage of students reaching level three)	46.8	50.7

There is a slight decline in performance in three other components:

	1999	2000

information text (10 point scale)	7.63	7.25
media text: (percentage of students reaching level three)	76.6	65.5
personal narrative: (percentage of students reaching level three)	71.2	67.2
There is a significant decline in performance on the short story/story board task: (percentage of students reaching level three)	57.8	36.7

"We have high expectations for our students, but there is clearly room for improvement in all of these test scores," said Ms. Purves. "With this information, we can work with school boards on strategies to improve student learning."

All provincial tests are based on new English language arts, math and science curricula that are common across Nova Scotia and throughout the Atlantic provinces.

Both the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation curriculum and the grade 12 Atlantic Canada examinations were developed by provincial departments of education in the four Atlantic Provinces. Nova Scotia is the first of the four provinces to start using the Atlantic Canada Examinations.

The Grade 6 test was developed by the Nova Scotia Department of Education.

The government of Nova Scotia is committed to improving accountability of the public school system through regular assessments, particularly in the area of literacy.

The department is working to add assessments to other subject areas and at other grade levels. This year, biology and physics will be added to the list of exams for Grade 12 students. There are also plans to test students in math.

The Department of Education is also introducing program supports to target areas that need improvement, as identified by the assessments. In September, the department launched the Active Young Readers program to focus on reading and writing skills in the early years.

In addition, the department is conducting a survey of all English language arts teachers and their principals to collect information about curriculum implementation. Results of this ongoing Curriculum Implementation Review Project will be used to develop strategies to improve program delivery.

FOR BROADCAST USE:

The Department of Education has released results of Grade 6 and Grade 12 student assessments conducted in the last school year.

Grade 12 students were tested in English, English/communication and chemistry for the first time this year. Average results ranged from 51 to 60 per cent.

Grade 6 students were tested in English language arts for the second year.

A comparison of the 1999 and 2000 results shows fluctuations in most categories and a significant drop in one.

Education Minister Jane Purves said that the department has set high expectations for students, but there is clearly room for improvement. She said that information from the tests will help the department and school boards to improve student learning.

The department has already launched the Reading Recovery program to focus on reading and writing skills in the early years.

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